



THE VALIANT

VETERANS AFFAIRS LOGISTICAL INFORMATION AND NEWS TODAY



APRIL 2004

VA REGIONAL OFFICE

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day

April 9th is National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, not to be confused with National POW/MIA Day which is in September. Do you know why April 9th was chosen and what significance that day had in 1942?

On April 9, 1942, 62 years ago, a starving and exhausted U.S. force at Bata-an surrendered to the invading Japanese. The next day, the infamous Bata-an Death March began. Ten thousand American soldiers, along with thousands of Filipinos, were marched 63 grueling, tortuous miles. One thousand American soldiers died from maltreatment or were murdered along the way. The rest faced years of brutal and deadly captivity – a third died later in captivity.

The 20th century saw more than 142,000 Americans held as prisoners of war. Some, like the 3 soldiers taken in Kosovo, the 23 prisoners of the Gulf War, and our 6 Iraqi Freedom POWs suffered short periods of captivity. Others, like the more than 130,000 prisoners of the Japanese and Germans in World War II, and those interned during Korea and Vietnam, spent years in captivity. Few have paid a higher price in the name of duty than our nations former prisoners-of-war.

We remember with profound gratitude and humility the price they paid to preserve our freedom by sacrificing their own. There are no forgotten conflicts, no forgotten soldiers, and no forgotten promises. We remember their families and salute the wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, and the sons and daughters who endured years of painful uncertainty, doubt, and loss.

William W. McLemore, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and International Affairs, provides the following information. “Sadly, only one third of America’s former POWs since World War I are still living (about 36,500). More than 90 percent of living former POWs are in receipt of compensation for service-connected injuries, diseases, or illnesses. Yet, thousands more of America’s former POWs may be eligible for VA benefits, but have not applied for them.”

Most of you are aware of, and many of you are involved in, the tremendous outreach efforts and specialized customer service for former POWs provided by the Detroit VA Regional Office. Thank all of you for the work you do. Special thanks to Nancy Delcimmuto, our POW Coordinator.

Secretary Principi affirms, “Former POWs sacrificed for their country in time of need, and it’s the nation’s turn to serve them.” Please remember our former POWs all year and especially on Friday, April 9, 2004.

THE VA VINE



"The VA Vine" is our new name for this page of the newsletter where you are invited to share news of any special event or celebration that involves you or a family member that you'd like to announce! Examples are: weddings, graduations, births, awards, a class you completed, a contest you or a family member won, or maybe you have a display at a local art fair or craft show. Any news about what's happening at work or home that involves someone in our VA family. Announcements can be sent in to any of the newsletter committee members in person or by e-mail. Let's hear your news!

To start off this month's **VA Vine**, I have an announcement submitted by Latessa, alias Bea Well, RN. She wants us to know about a series of workshops open to the public entitled, **Nutrition and Clinical Medicine Lectures**. All sessions are on Thursday nights from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. and are only \$10 (\$5 for seniors.) Call 888-723-1424 to reserve your seat. Nurse Bea Well says that these lectures are great! Let this be the year you take charge of your life.

April 15, 2004 – Thomas Kabisch, D.O. - "Integrative Cancer Care" A comprehensive overview of cancer therapy as envisioned by Integrative Medicine. Ramada Hotel, 17017 West Nine Mile Road, Southfield, MI (248) 552-7777.

April 22, 2004 – Bradshaw Mallard, M.S., PA-C – "Slowing Brain Aging and Improving Memory" Cutting edge information from research at major medical centers throughout the world about the role of nutrition to slow aging and improve memory. Henry Ford Centennial Library, 16301 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, MI

April 29, 2004 – Pamela Smith, MD, M.P.H. – "The Role of Nutrition, Vascular Biology, and Nutraceuticals in the Treatment of Hypertension" Good nutrition and supplements are crucial in the regulation of blood pressure, limiting organ damage and hardening of the arteries. Ramada Hotel, 17017 West Nine Mile Road, Southfield, MI.

How Much is That Kitty in the Window?

Submitted by

Daniele Medina

Some of you know that I have recently combined two households leaving me with a dog and five cats to care for! Unfortunately, they are not all happy with our new arrangement. I have two cats that are looking for new loving families. They are both male, neutered, and declawed.



Moe is black and white spotted. He has a very classic feline face, almost "Siamese like." He is active but loves being cuddled. He is about two years old.

Jack is a big guy, he is very relaxed, but can not be with dogs. He keeps going after ours...but he is declawed so no damage done. He is black with white paws and white chest and is about three years old.

The cats are both great and I love them, it's just that five are too many. If you know of anyone who would like to know more about them, call me at extension 3870. Pictures are available. Thanks,

Daniele

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RECIPES FOR APRIL

Glazes for the Perfect Easter Ham

Fully cooked 4 – 6 lb boneless ham

Place ham on a rack in a shallow baking pan. If desired, use a paring knife to score top of ham in a diamond pattern, making cuts 1/4" deep. Insert a meat thermometer. Bake in 325~ oven for 1-1/4 to 2-1/2 hours or until meat thermometer registers 140~ and ham is heated through. During the last 15 minutes of baking, brush ham with one of the following glazes. Heat any remaining glaze and serve with the ham. Makes 16-24 servings.

MAPLE PECAN GLAZE

1 C Maple syrup
1 C Orange marmalade
1 T Butter or margarine
1/2 C Pecans -- chopped, toasted

In a small saucepan, combine maple syrup and orange marmalade. Heat until bubbly. Whisk in butter until smooth. Stir in pecans. Makes 2 cups.

CRANBERRY GLAZE

12 oz Cranberry juice concentrate - thawed
3 T Dijon style mustard
2 T Brown sugar
2 T Lemon juice
4 tsp Cornstarch
1/4 tsp Ground cloves
In a small saucepan combine all ingredients. Cook and stir mixture til thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Makes 1-3/4 cups.

Easter Rabbit Cookies

1 C butter or margarine
1-1/2 C sugar
3 eggs
3 C sifted flour
3 tsp baking powder
1 tsp milk
2 tsp vanilla

Cream the butter and sugar. Add the eggs and beat well. Sift the dry ingredients and add them to the creamed mixture. Add the milk and the vanilla and chill the dough for an hour. Roll the dough out. Dip a rabbit-shaped cookie cutter into flour and cut the cookies. Place them on a greased baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees.

Contributed by Julie Tucker

As promised last issue, here's another Korean Recipe for the grill from Ed West

Gal-bi or Kal-bi (Marinated Beef Ribs)

Gal-bi or Kal-bi is Korean marinated beef ribs typically found in most Korean restaurants and almost all Korean BBQ. The beef ribs are cut to about 1/4 inch thick and can be found in all Korean food stores.

INGREDIENTS:

Large sealable container or Tupperware. Make sure they do not stain or absorb odor.
1/2 cup soy sauce. (I use Kikkoman brand)
1/2 cup white sugar
4 cups cold water
1 white onion
3 lbs Gal-Bi meat

INSTRUCTIONS:

Puree onion with 1 cup of water.
Combine onion, water, sugar, soy sauce. Mix well.
Marinate Gal-Bi meat in a tight sealing container in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours.
Fire up the BBQ and enjoy!

Here's a list of local Korean food stores from Ed:

KaGoPa: 12 Mile & Southfield, on 12 mile behind Dunkin Donuts next to Woo Lee Gardens

Asia mart: 16 mile and Dequindre, on Dequindre, south of 16 mile.

Uri Market: on 13 mile and Orchard Lake-West of Orchard Lake on south side about one block. Three or four stores west of Chinese restaurant.

Oriental Market: on 16 and Rochester Road on east side. About 1 block north of 16.

****Look for another market on Gratiot south of 15 Mile Road, west side of Gratiot



Hawk! Sure we're busy. Long work days, errands after work, household chores, care of loved ones, reading mail and journals, keeping current with friends, trying to squeeze in enough sleep, quiet time, exercise, and proper nutrition. We can get lost in this stuff sometimes and miss the pure, raw beauty of nature and the life messages it brings.

I was blessed twice this year to have a hawk grace my close vision. Oh, I've seen falcons and hawks before from quite a distance in the Tetons and Grand Canyon. But ah, not these two times. The first presentation was this year when snow was still deep in my yard. I was on my couch catching up on some reading when I looked through the doorwall to see a large hawk dining on one of the birds that frequented my animal sanctuary out back (oops, sorry angel, must have been your time to cross over.) I watched that majestic, awesome creature for ten minutes and got to see it spread its wings and quietly glide away, belly full. The 2nd time was last weekend. I was early to meet a friend for breakfast and parked near a stand of trees. Into the tree, right in front of my eyes, landed a spectacular hawk! Soon, I knew the reason. The remains of a rabbit hung off a lower limb. The hawk struggled to pull it free from its entanglement in the branches as 2 blackbirds dive bombed it and tried to get the prize. I watched in amazement as this wondrous act of nature transpired in front of me. (Sure beats running into the restaurant to look at a newspaper while awaiting my friend.) Okay, I thought, "Hawks, in my face, twice in less than 3 months...what does it mean?" I was moved to dig around in my less than organized library and find "Animal Speak", a great book by Ted Andrews. The book encourages you to open your heart and mind to the wisdom of the animal world and listen to the lessons and messages they bring. When an animal or bird crosses your path so explicitly, it may be trying to tell you something. The book stated the hawk is a messenger bird, and that whenever it shows up, you need to pay attention as a message is coming (gulp). "Hawk medicine teaches you to be observant...life is sending you signals...it can spread its wings to great width and it can teach you to use your creative energies in the same way." Wow. Much food for thought here. Do our mundane activities of daily living keep us from 'seeing' all the gifts present and available to us and for us?

There is truly another dimension out there that would be a shame to miss. A friend used to say, "open up those eyes and see!" (I never forgot that Russell, because it's good advice.) There is much to learn in our time on this earth...And speaking of learning, I wanted to inform you about a series of nutritional and clinical medicine workshops that are open to the public this month. They are listed in "The Vine" column for announcements and events on page 2 of this newsletter. Originally open to healthcare professionals only, some wise healer decided to open the lectures to all who are interested. Brilliant! These are not your standard, 'eat right, exercise, and take your medicine' generic health education fodder. Oh no. These lecturers are practicing healthcare professionals who are free thinkers and look at many ways to help heal bodies using natural, holistic methods that blend with the entire person, body, mind, and spirit. If you have any questions after reviewing the brief summaries on the workshop sessions on page 2, please let me know.

Before I close, I want to recommend a book regarding your health - one that is aligned with the gist of being 'in tune,' 'awake,' and 'present' in your life. It is Heal Your Body by Louise L. Hay. She states that she knows that dis-ease can be reversed by reversing our mental, old childhood, and negative patterns. (What are you thinking right now?) She utilizes awareness and affirmations to replace old harmful ways of thought. This little blue book lists medical and psycho-social problems, probable causes, and new thought patterns to help alleviate them. For example--if you have a problem with fatigue, probable causes could be resistance, boredom, lack of love for what you do. A new thought pattern affirmation would be, 'I am enthusiastic about life, filled with energy and enthusiasm.' Another example would be--if you have a problem with constipation, probable causes could be refusing to release old ideas, stuck in the past, sometimes stinginess. A new thought pattern would be, 'As I release the past, the new and fresh and vital enter. I allow life to flow through me.'

Ring a little too true? Hard to read? Hey, there's much more...and who said self-growth doesn't hurt? Marianne Williamson said, 'We must go through the darkness in order to see the Light.' See you next issue, in the meantime...be well. **By Latessa, RVSR**

HAPPY HOPPY THOUGHTS

Every oak tree started out as a nut who stood it's ground. - Author unknown

You can value the difference in other people. When someone disagrees with you, you can say, "Good! You see it differently." You don't have to agree with them; you simply affirm them. And you can seek to understand. - The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (page 284)

Noah's Ark and Life - Author unknown
Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark...

- One: Don't miss the boat.
Two: Remember that we are all in the same boat.
Three: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
Four: Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, some one may ask you to do something really big.
Five: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
Six: Build your future on high ground.
Seven: For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
Eight: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
Nine: When you're stressed out, float awhile.
Ten: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.
Eleven: No matter the storm, there's always a rainbow waiting.



The good news is I spotted the first robin of spring.
The bad news is he spotted me first.

What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back? A stick.

Two women in a store: The first one says, "You look like Helen Greene." The other one says, "I look worse in pink."

Hare-Raising Humor!!!

Q: How do bunnies stay healthy?

A: Eggercise!



Q: What do you get when you find a rabbit with no hair?

A: A hairless hare!

Q: Why are people always tired in April?

A: Because they just finished a march!

Q: Why did the Easter egg hide?

A: He was a little chicken!

Q: What do you call a duck who plays basketball?

A: A slam duck!

Q: What do you call a bunny with a large brain?

A: An egghead!

Q: What grows between your nose and chin?

A: Tulips (Two Lips).

Q: Why did the rabbit cross the road?

A: Because it was the chicken's day off.

Q: What do you call a bunny with a dictionary in his pants?

A: A smarty pants.

Q: What do you call ten rabbits marching backwards?

A: A receding hareline.



MORE EASTER FUN....

Safe Tips for Easter Eggs



Eggs are frequently handled at Easter time and each handling occasion is one more chance that the eggs might come into contact with bacteria. To avoid bacterial contamination, wash your hands thoroughly before you handle eggs at every step, including cooking,

cooling and dyeing. After cooking and cooling, refrigerate hard-cooked eggs in their cartons until you're ready to color them. Refrigerate them again after you dye them and after you display them.

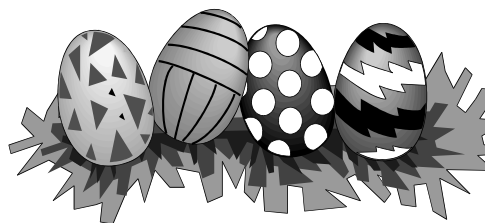
Color only uncracked eggs. If you want to eat your dyed eggs later, use food coloring or specially made food-grade egg dyes dissolved in water that is warmer than the eggs. If any eggs crack during dyeing or while on display, discard them along with any eggs that have been out of refrigeration for more than 2 hours. If you hide eggs, consider hiding places carefully. Avoid areas where the eggs might come into contact with dirt, pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects or lawn chemicals. If you keep hard-cooked eggs out of refrigeration for many hours or several days for decoration or for hiding, cook extra eggs for eating. Either discard the eggs that have been left out or use them only for display.



Coloring Easter Eggs

Did you know---- you can obtain the following colors by using natural ingredients???

Pale Red:	Fresh beets, cranberries, frozen raspberries
Orange:	Yellow onion skins
Light yellow:	Orange or lemon peels, carrot tops, celery seed or ground cumin
Yellow:	Ground turmeric
Pale green:	Spinach leaves
Green-gold:	Yellow Delicious apple peels
Blue:	Canned blueberries or red cabbage leaves
Beige to brown:	Strong brewed coffee



To dye the perfect Easter eggs the natural way, here's what to do:

1. Put eggs in a single layer in a pan. Pour water in pan until the eggs are covered.
2. Add about a teaspoon of vinegar.
3. Add the natural dye appropriate to the color you want your eggs to be. (The more eggs you are dying at a time, the more dye you will need to use.)
4. Bring water to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Remove the substance you used to color the eggs. Put eggs in a bowl. If you want your eggs to be a darker shade, cover them with the dye and let them stand overnight in the refrigerator.

Information on eggs and food safety is also available by calling the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 800-535-4555.

GOALS AND PERSPECTIVES



Data & Performance

By Charles Moore

We had an extremely productive month in March. We completed a total of 1594 rating end products (EPs) in March; exceeding our production target of 1400 by 194. Give yourself a pat-on-the-back for a job well-done. Despite our abundant production during March, we missed our rating inventory target by a measly 13. That's right, I said 13; so close, yet so far away! This brings to mind an expression that my Grandmother often used, "every little bit helps." The inventory target for end-of-month April is 6750; as of April 1, 2004, our inventory is 7032. Let's see if we can exceed this critical target this month.

During March, many of the rating-specialists (RVSRs) assisted the Pre-Determination Team (Pre-D) by developing cases for ready-to-rate (RTR) status. Their efforts on the Pre-D team resulted in 200-300 more RTR cases for March. Since they did such an excellent job, VSC management may borrow their talent again in April to help bolster our ready-to-rate stockpile. Those extra RTR cases enabled us to have another stellar rating production month. We have eclipsed rating-production of 1,500 for three consecutive months. Prior to this accomplishment, we had not achieved three-consecutive months of rating-production over 1,500 in over two-years.

Wow!

Last month an area of notable concern in the VSC was the volume of pending over 6-month-old authorization (non-rating) cases. On March 1, 2004, Detroit's had 21% of these cases; on April 1, 2004, Detroit's percentage was 19.2%. This is the lowest percentage for over six-month old non-rating cases in over two years; in fact, this ranks us 5th out of the 16 stations in the Eastern Area!

Last month we looked at the volume of non-rating cases pending over 6-months as an area of concern and we improved it in one-month. Let's see if we can accomplish the same great results in these two areas of concern:

1. The volume of Homeless veteran claims that are over-than six-months old; and
2. The volume of ex-POW claims over six-months.

Both of these areas have recently drawn the attention of Central Office because we have more than most stations in the East Area. The goal is not to have any cases pending more than six-months in these two critical categories. In March, we had 9 Homeless and 35 POW claims over six months old. We'll check our progress next month. Please ask specific questions you have about the goals, our status, our ranking, etc. If you have an idea for processing work better than any current method we're using, please give us the details. Implemented ideas will be rewarded and your brilliance will be recognized!

Performance Awards

Here are February Individual Production Goals and Team Top Performers Incentive Awards approved for the month of February 2004. Individual target goals set by the Director were for Rating Team Veterans Service Representatives (RVSRs) who exceeded 120 Completed Ratings; Post-D Team VSR's who exceeded 120 Ratings Processed and Senior VSRs exceeded 200 Ratings Authorized; Triage Team clerks who found Special Targeted Search Cases; and Pre-D Team VSRs who exceeded 85 Ready To Rate cases. Congratulations to the following team members who received awards:

RVSR

Dennis Wagenschutz
Deborah Koscielski
Michael Johnson

VSR

Catherine Walker
Dee Hay
Daniele Medina
Kimberly Mathis
Charles Stokes
James Overton

SVSR

Alexis Chateau
Elaine Craig

CLERKS

John Carlisi
Frenchie Carr

Team Incentive Awards approved for VSC Division February 2004 Top Performers were:

Pre-D Team: Kimberly Mathis, Dale Owen,
Christopher Toal
Post-D Team: Dorothea Hay, Reba Reid,
Jean Newling
Rating Team: Bettie Belcher, Rick Willey,
Brian Hutcheon

THANK YOU'S AND MORE....



The following email gave a BIG thank you to the **Public Contact Team** from Meghan Meyer for sharing their best practices with her for a presentation at the ACHE conference:

"Thank you, I appreciate your information that you have provided and it will be very useful material for my project in determining "Best Practices". It sounds like the VBA in Detroit is going above and beyond to make sure that the returning veterans are receiving the kind of attention that we can only hope other VBA's are providing. I think the personal touch through the phone is excellent and it allows the veterans to receive that one-on-one time to hear what benefits they are entitled to and ask any questions as well as receive a direct answer. Thank you again for your response."

--Meghan Meyer, Health Systems Trainee
VA Illiana Health Care System

Don't forget to share thank you notes you receive here at the Regional Office. They should be submitted to Penny in the Director's Office. Keep up the good work Detroit, and THANK YOU!

HEALTH TIPS FOR YOU

By Elaine Craig

Herbs are a gift from nature. They include leaves, bark, berries, roots, gums, seeds, stems and flowers. They have been used for thousands of years to help maintain good health.



GOTU KOLA is an excellent "brain food" which promotes memory and helps alleviate mental fatigue; excellent for the eyes, impotence, endurance, energy and normalizing blood pressure; considered to be an excellent nerve tonic.

(You should consult with your doctor or local health food store on literature regarding herbs or any medications.)

Guess Who?

By

Daniele Medina

1. What time did you wake up this morning?
5:00 am
 2. What is your favorite movie? Old School
 3. People would be surprised to find out ... that I write music
 4. Who had the most influence on your life last week? Nobody
 5. What was the last thing you read? E-mail, Maxim
 6. What is your favorite color? Blue
 7. Marshmallow peeps, bunnies or chick, nummy or nasty? Nasty
 8. What is one thing that irritates you?
Noise
 9. What color is your bathroom? Cream
 10. What's your favorite drink? Diet mountain Dew
 11. How long have you worked at the VA?
2 1/2 years
 12. How long is your commute? 1/2 hour to 45 minutes
 13. If you were a superhero, what would your superpower be? Reading peoples' minds
 14. Do you floss every day? No
 15. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
One sister
 16. How often do you change your sheets?
Every two weeks
 17. Do you screen your mother's phone calls? No
 18. Mr. Rogers, Friendly role model for children? Or just plain creepy? Creepy
 19. What's the name of the person who gave you your first kiss? I don't know...
 20. What is your favorite thing about working here?
Being able to take leave any time I want.
- Guess Who???? The answer is on the next page of the newsletter.

THE VA VOICE



The VA Voice is an open forum for anything that may be going on in the office. (We found the comments submitted for the Town Hall meetings very interesting!) It will give you all a chance to voice your opinion and let us know what's going on with you or with the office. Please keep in mind that we will not print any slanderous material and so you may want to keep people's names out of your submissions. We will set up a drop box on the 13th floor break room sometime this month. Every month we will review what has been submitted and print as many of your comments as possible.

Our first column is from Keith Thompson, Director...

Detroit RO Director Reflections

March 23, 2004, marked my one year anniversary at the Detroit Regional Office. As I reflect back on the past year, I realize how much has happened. Personally, this was a time of great change for me and my family. Also, it represented a great challenge in taking on the responsibility of being the Director of this office.

When I arrived, I made some promises to myself, some of which I made public. In most cases, most of what I expected to accomplish within this year has been accomplished. In my first town hall meeting, many employees wanted to know how long it would take to turn things around. At that time, my response was that my timetable was approximately a year. That was said with a great deal of optimism and hope. But, it was also not said with just hope, but with a basic plan to make it happen.

I won't say if things have been turned around in Detroit at this time, I will leave that up to others to decide. What I do hope is that if you ask yourself if things are better now than a year ago, most will feel that there has been identifiable progress. By no means are things perfect, nor have they been totally turned around, as we still have quite a way to go.

I do believe that morale is better, not great, but better. Our station has met major goals established by Washington for the first 3 months of 2004, and in many ways we are working together better and communicating as evidenced by the work of the Partnership Council, the station newsletter, The Valiant, and other smaller ways.

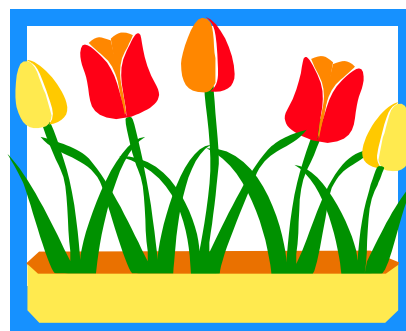
I also wish to openly thank the Union leadership, Mrs. Harrington and Mrs. Moore, for their part in working with me and this station's management to continually communicate and provide their expertise in making this station better each day.

Finally, I wish to thank each and every employee for their efforts this past year and ask that they continue to work hard and hold me and others accountable for making this one of the best places to work and one of the top offices in the country. Thanks.

Keith J. Thompson
Director

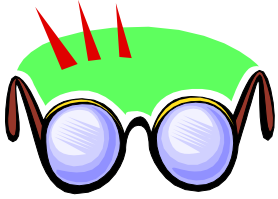
ANSWER TO GUESS WHO???

It's Bryan Bowen from Veterans Service Center!



BITS AND PIECES

“I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW, OR
MAYBE SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE?”



A study is in the works for improved dental, vision and hearing benefits. A recent article in the Washington Post noted that the House civil service subcommittee has approved a bill to review options for improved dental, vision and hearing benefits for federal employees.”

Although this is only a study, it is a step in the right direction to examine health benefits not currently offered to federal employees. This bill would require the Bush administration to study and present to Congress options regarding these benefits. Many federal workers have cited in surveys that they want better dental and vision coverage more than any other improvements in benefits.

According to an article in the Washington Post, back in 1987, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) froze dental and vision benefits to focus on hospital and surgical benefits. Also, OPM did not want to increase the cost of health premiums.

Since that time, the article states the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) coverage is no longer competitive with coverage provided by large companies, according to data provided to the subcommittee.

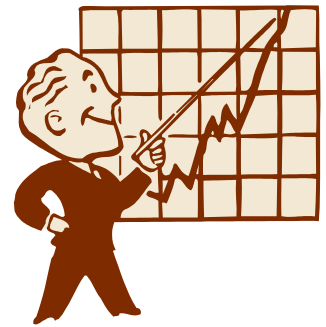
By June 30, the findings by OPM are scheduled to be presented to Congress.

Compiled from original article by Stephen Barr, Friday, March 19, 2004, Washingtonpost.com with permission.

CAN'T DECIDE ON WHERE TO INVEST YOUR
TSP CONTRIBUTIONS?

In the future, TSP may be able to help you. Trying to decide which fund to invest in the Thrift Savings Plan can be confusing to many investors. Most of us would like a good return, without too much risk. 35% of TSP participants last month, invested in the no-risk government securities, the “G” fund.

The TSP board recently discussed an addition to the TSP funds according to the Washington Post. A new option, called “lifecycle” would help TSP participants plan their investments based on their age and expectations. This would assist investors to develop a savings strategy without spending the time planning and researching individual funds.



The “lifecycle” concept for TSP would require participants to pick the date they intend to start drawing down from the TSP savings. Then, the “lifestyle” option would adjust each participants portfolio automatically to ensure diversification and appropriate risk.

The general idea for the “lifecycle” option is, as the draw-down time approaches, the asset allocation would become more conservative with fixed-income investments. This option is only in the discussion stage by the board at the current time.

Compiled from an article by Stephen Barr, Tuesday, March 16, 2004; Page B02. Washingtonpost.com with permission.

A Baseball Riddle

What year was it? A sellout of over 50,000 people attended the game between the Tigers and the Indians. About 20,000 bats were distributed to the excited fans and the sale of beer seemed to never stop flowing. The Detroit Tiger's ace pitcher (American League MVP), who lost only 6 games during the regular season that year, is defeated 4-2. After the game, we headed to the Rambler as the crowd exited into the streets disappointed, some were angry and many were mad. You wouldn't believe what happened next, but that's another story! It's Bat Day in Detroit.

What year was it?

- a. 1998
- b. 1984
- c. 1977
- d. 1968



The Rambler is:

- a. A steakhouse
- b. An automobile
- c. A 'blind pig'
- d. A peanut stand in front of the ballpark

What's a blind pig?

- a. Grilled ham and cheese on rye bread
- b. Messy eater
- c. Gambling/after hours joint
- d. An intersection with heavy traffic and no traffic control devices

Tiger's Ace Pitcher that year who lost only six games during the regular season was:

- a. Denny McLain
- b. Mark "the Bird" Fidrych
- c. Jack Morris
- d. Mickey Lolich

The Federal Golf League Needs You!

Anybody interested in being a substitute on the Federal Golf League? We golf on Wednesday and the starting date is April 21, 2004. Tee time is around 4:30 pm at Fellows Creek Golf Course (Wayne/Canton area.) The cost is around \$15 for nine holes. It's a two man (any gender) per team format and we currently have 8 teams. If one of the regular players can't make it, we will call someone from our sub list to take their place. None of us are very good at the game and we are always looking to add a few players or even new teams each year. If you are interested, please call me, Tony at extension 3856.

P.S. The annual VA Memorial Day Golf Outing is coming up in May, so get your foursome together and practice.



Answers to What Year Was It?
(d, b, c, a)